

Summer 2005

MAINEARTS *Mag* COMMISSION

The official publication of the Maine Arts Commission

"building Maine communities through the arts"

What arts
education
can do:

Coming together
through differences

"God put me on this
earth . . . to put
more men out on
the dance floor"

Remembering
the father of
"new vaudeville"



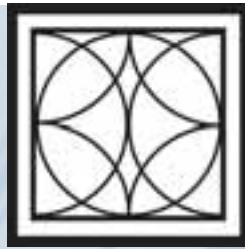
It's not just
about baskets
anymore...

Are you using
MAINEARTS.com?

Disappearing
Transformation:
Public art &
censorship

Artist Conversations:
Linden Frederick
&
Alison Rector






MAINE ARTS COMMISSION


building Maine communities through the arts

MISSION: The Maine Arts Commission shall encourage and stimulate public interest and participation in the cultural heritage and programs of our state; shall expand the state's cultural resources; and shall encourage and assist freedom of artistic expression for the well being of the arts, to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of persons in all parts of the state.

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ON THE COVER

FAIRGROUD
LINDEN FREDERICK
OIL ON LINEN,
2004, 40" X 40."

COURTESY OF
THE FORUM GALLERY.

See page 14 for story.



CONTENTS

CONTENTS:

SUMMER 2005



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

4

MESSAGE FROM JOHN M. ROHMAN, CHAIR

5

CALENDARS

6

Grants calendar fiscal year 2006

Maine Arts Commission meetings

Executive Committee meetings

Maine Arts Commission committee meetings

AGENCY NEWS

7-8

Maine Arts Commission opens agency rulemaking process

Maine Arts Commission updates from TTY to NexTalk

Maine Arts Commission merchandise available

Are you using MAINEARTS.com?

REGIONAL NEWS

9

NEFA's Expeditions Program brings trend-setting dance company to Maine

COMMUNITY NEWS

10

Remembering Benny Reehl, the father of "new vaudeville"

PUBLIC ART

11-13

Disappearing Transformation: Public art & censorship

CONTEMPORARY ARTS

14-17

Artist Conversations: Linden Frederick & Alison Rector

ARTS IN EDUCATION

18-19

What arts education can do: Coming together through differences

COMMUNITY ARTS & TRADITIONAL ARTS

20-23

"God put me on this earth . . . to put more men out on the dance floor."

It's not just about baskets anymore . . .





LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

It was an honor on June 19 for the Maine Arts Commission to co-host – with the *Beloit Poetry Journal* – a surprise celebration for former Maine Arts Commission member Marion Kingston Stocking. Therefore, this month I am sharing this column with Maine Arts Commission member Lee Sharkey whose comments about Marion’s contributions to literature are below.

From my perspective, I would like to focus on Marion’s contributions to what the Maine Arts Commission has become due to her efforts. Marion, who served on the Maine Arts Commission from 1993-99 and on its literature panel prior to that time, was the Maine Arts Commission member who provided the rare combination of wisdom and advocacy to convince her colleagues to redesign the agency by making a commitment to developing the arts at the community level. Marion’s work with local cultural assessment and planning in Hancock County grew into the statewide program now known as Discovery Research. Discovery Research is a national model of local cultural inventory work combined with pragmatic plans for arts programs. (For a detailed description of Discovery Research, review the link on MAINEARTS.com.)

Due to the attention Discovery Research has attracted, Maine has benefited financially from national public and foundation resources. Moreover, with now 32 Discovery Research projects completed or in process in all parts of Maine, an extensive grassroots “arts force” has been created. That “force” has been instrumental in the development of the New Century Community Program that has generated more than \$4 million in new dollars for arts and culture and in the more recent work with the Creative Economy. Without the solid community based foundation created through Discovery Research, I am convinced that the Maine Arts Commission would not have had the public support and confidence to develop larger funding models and a legitimate relationship with economic development.

We owe Marion a great deal of thanks for her leadership, insight, grace and good humor in giving us a people-based vision that has enriched Maine many fold. I invite you to read Lee Sharkey’s comments below (for one writer’s comments on another) that were prepared for the recent celebration honoring Marion for her 50 years of service to the journal and her contributions to the arts in Maine and beyond.

Alden C. Wilson
Director

“Few people, if any, can match Marion Stocking’s record of service to the arts. As a young poet turned academic, Marion Kingston came to Beloit College in 1954, and soon thereafter joined the staff of the then-fledgling Beloit Poetry Journal. The crew of editors she became a part of included the poet David Ignatow and her soon-to-be husband David Stocking. This small group of poets, scholars and friends shaped the magazine’s collaborative editorial process, a tradition fortified by – in Marion’s words – “bread and soup and a love of the craft,” which sustained it through changes of staff and political weather and sustains it to this day. In 1984, on their retirement, Marion and David Stocking brought the journal with them to Maine. Upon David’s death in 1985, Marion took on the full responsibility of editing the journal, screening the dozens of poems that arrived each day at her mailbox, corresponding with contributors, writing book reviews, and overseeing every aspect of production and distribution – all with intelligence and generosity. She continued this devotion until two years ago, when she stepped down from the editorship to devote more time to book reviewing and other writing she had deferred these many years.

The Beloit Poetry Journal, one of the oldest in continuous publication in the English-speaking world, has a well-deserved reputation for spotting and publishing poets early in their careers. Among the poets whose first or early publication was in the Beloit Poetry Journal are Galway Kinnell, Anne Sexton, Sharon Olds, W. S. Merwin and more recently Mary Leader and Sherman Alexie. The journal’s loyal readers look to it for the excellence and aesthetic range of its poetry, but also for Marion’s reviews, which in the belles lettres tradition address concerns of craft or aesthetics while introducing readers to books they may well want to read. As good as the poems are, many readers when they pick up a new issue turn to the review before looking at them. For them and for her colleagues on the journal, Marion Kingston Stocking and the Beloit Poetry Journal will always be inextricable.” – Lee Sharkey

Remember to say “thank you”

MESSAGE FROM JOHN M. ROHMAN, CHAIR

First things first – I would like to send out a very big thank you to for everyone who contacted their legislators during the recent budget session. As I write this letter, the bond package has not yet been determined – although the budget has been finalized. As we all know, money is an issue and with new unknowns such as the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) facing us, the budget is even more challenging than ever. The fact that Governor Baldacci and the Maine Legislature have shown continued support for the Maine Arts Commission and the state’s other cultural agencies is a tribute to their understanding of the strong need for these vital resources for all our citizens. It is clear to me that they recognize these agencies are extremely important in our knowledge-based economy.

I believe there is a direct correlation between our hard work, the current successful relationship with the Maine Legislature and the very positive results that the state experienced with the New Century Community Program. By now, many of you have seen the maps indicating the various locations where these dollars were invested (please refer to MAINEARTS.com to view the maps and find more information). This statewide investment has provided the support that we now rely on from our legislators – so please continue to recognize and thank them.

One of the best “advocacy actions” that will strengthen the important relationships between your organization, your legislator and legislature as a whole and the Maine Arts Commission is a very simple one. When your community receives a grant from the Maine Arts Commission or any cultural agency, I encourage you to invite your local elected officials and ask them to be present at an event (such as an opening reception or press conference) for a public “thank you.” Frankly, that is where much of these dollars flow from, and we should make that link clear in a very visible way.

The leap from the New Century Community Program to where we are today with the creative economy initiative, for me, is an easy one. We have demonstrated the breadth of the arts and cultural community in Maine, and now we have a vehicle – the creative economy – to open up new economic opportunities. The Northern Maine Development Commission is finalizing details for the Madawaska Creative Economy meeting. They in turn will be looking at some of the results that we learned in Skowhegan at their recent meeting. All of which was discussed at the July 20 meeting in Rockland.

As we said at the beginning of this phase of the creative economy initiative, we will be taking this concept to all corners of Maine. I look forward to a comprehensive report at the end of the year that will document the strong roles that arts and culture play in this exciting endeavor. I am extremely proud of what both the Maine Arts Commission members and staff have done for the state of Maine. Further, I am excited about the early efforts of the new Creative Economy Council.

John M. Rohman
Chair



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Robert Wetzels, Raymond
Stephen Wicks, Orono

GRANTS CALENDAR FISCAL YEAR 2006

July 1, 2005	Good Idea Grant Arts Service Organizations Partnership Agreement
October 7, 2005	Good Idea Grant Sustaining Traditional Arts in the Community
January 6, 2006	Good Idea Grant Sustaining Traditional Arts in the Community
February 3, 2006	MaineArtistAccess
March 3, 2006	Letter of Intent, Discovery Research
April 7, 2006	Good Idea Grant Discovery Research
April 14, 2006	Artists in Maine Communities
May 5, 2006	Traditional Arts Apprenticeships
May 12, 2006	Partners in Arts & Learning
June 9, 2006	Individual Artist Fellowships Letter of Intent, Arts Service Organizations Partnership Agreement

*Guidelines can be found at
www.mainearts.com/Grants/index.shtml*

MAINE ARTS COMMISSION COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Arts Accessibility
September 15, 2005
March 30, 2006
June 16, 2006

Arts Development
August 18, 2005
October 13, 2005
April 13, 2006
June 16, 2006

Arts in Education
September 16, 2005
January 5, 2006
June 16, 2006

Community Arts & Traditional Arts
September 23, 2005
February 9, 2006
May 5, 2006
June 16, 2006

Community Relations & Public Information
September 15, 2005
January 19, 2006
April 4, 2006
June 16, 2006

Contemporary Arts
September 14, 2005
January 17, 2006
June 16, 2006

Public Art
September 20, 2005
January 24, 2006
June 16, 2006

MAINE ARTS COMMISSION MEETINGS

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Friday, October 14, 2005 - Bangor
(with artists' reception to follow)
Friday, February 10, 2006 - location TBA
Friday, June 16, 2006 - location TBA
Friday, October 20, 2006 - location TBA
Friday, March 9, 2007 - location TBA
Friday, June 15, 2007 - location TBA

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Maine Arts Commission, Augusta

Thursday, August 18, 2005
Thursday, January 19, 2006
Thursday, April 13, 2006
Thursday, August 17, 2006
Thursday, December 7, 2006
Thursday, February 8, 2007
Thursday, April 12, 2007

*For an up-to-date calendar and
grant deadline information, please visit:*



MAINE ARTS COMMISSION OPENS AGENCY RULEMAKING PROCESS

John M. Rohman, chair, announced, at the June 17 Maine Arts Commission meeting, the agency would be opening the Rulemaking Process to update the rules to match current grantmaking practices.

Throughout the years, the Maine Arts Commission has voted to operate in accordance to the needs of the public and/or to address specific public interests and values. The agency rules have not been updated to reflect these (somewhat) subtle changes. “It is a tedious process, but one that is needed in order to accurately state how the Maine Arts Commission does business,” commented Bryan W. Knicely, assistant director & accessibility coordinator for the agency.

The process, which includes public comment, requires the following benchmarks:

July 18, 2005	Notice to Secretary of State & Legislative Council Notice to Maine Arts Commission constituents
July 27, 2005	Secretary of State Publication of Maine Arts Commission Rulemaking Process
August 18, 2005	2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Augusta Rulemaking Public Hearing: Executive Committee Meeting
September 2, 2005	Deadline for public comment (5:00 p.m. EST)
October 14, 2005	Maine Arts Commission votes to adopt proposed agency rules

MAINE ARTS COMMISSION UPDATES FROM TTY TO NEX TALK 877/887-3878

The Maine Arts Commission updated the agency TTY line to a toll-free NexTalk system. The update will allow former TTY callers to reach a specific staff person.

“The NexTalk system allows for direct accessibility of agency staff to callers, meaning faster and more accurate responses,” commented Bryan W. Knicely, assistant director & accessibility coordinator. “The former TTY line went to a general phone in the office and was not always answered by the same person, whereas the new system interacts with the agency’s computers making sure the message gets to the correct person.” NexTalk allows former TTY callers to leave a message which is emailed to the staff person by the system. Callers can also be transferred between staff like regular phone calls.

To contact the Maine Arts Commission staff via NexTalk, dial 877/887-3878. When prompted, enter the corresponding staff NexTalk User ID listed in the inside cover of this issue.

MAINE ARTS COMMISSION MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE

Due to the recent positive response of the new “artME” bumper stickers created by the Maine Arts Commission, a new online logo merchandise store has been created on CafePress.com.

Merchandise with the “artME” graphic is available, as well as Maine Arts Commission and MAINEARTS.com logos.

This online store was created in response to inquiries about merchandise and is meant to serve as a public service – providing a way for people to show their support for the Maine Arts Commission. Therefore, no profit is made from the sale of this merchandise.

To see what items are available, simply go to www.cafepress.com/mainearts.



ARE YOU USING MAINEARTS.com ?

If the answer is no, you are missing out!

The wonders of technology have given those involved in art and culture a great opportunity for growth through the promotion of their projects. If you have not been using the Maine Arts Commission's website, MAINEARTS.com, you may be missing out on valuable information, marketing and promotional opportunities and worldwide calls for artists.

MAINEARTS.com is not only a service for the Maine arts community, but also for all the citizens of Maine. It is a way for everyone to find out how the Maine Arts Commission is building Maine communities through the arts. The website offers a variety of easy-to-use interactive marketing features for Maine's artists and diverse cultural organizations. Setting up a MAINEARTS.com user account is quick and easy and provides access to all of the agency's interactive web services. By simply logging on today to MAINEARTS.com, selecting the "login now" icon and following the simple steps to create a new user account provides access to the following helpful and informative features:

- **Artists & Arts Organizations Directory** – all Maine artists and arts related businesses in Maine can self-subscribe for inclusion in this directory.
- **MAINEARTISTACCESS Directory** – a listing of artists juried into the MAINEARTISTACCESS program.
- **Education Artist Directory** – a listing of artists juried to receive the education artist status.
- **Maine Arts Events Calendar** – post your events in Maine to this searchable calendar.
- **Opportunities Directory** – a directory of upcoming worldwide opportunities.
- **News & Press Releases** – post your press announcements or view others.
- **Listserve** – a communication tool which allows you to select the type of information you prefer to receive from the Maine Arts Commission.

As part of the Maine Arts Commission's efforts to improve its services to the public, the agency is currently working on Phase II development of MAINEARTS.com, which will increase information, communication and add additional interactive features to broaden services to the public. The new-and-improved website is slated for launch in August 2005. A sampling of the site's new services and user-friendly enhancements include:

- **E-grant system** – apply for your grant online.
- **Increasing the search functionality for all interactive directories** – improves search time and provides a more user friendly result display.
- **Bulletin boards for each agency program** – a forum to discuss and share information.
- **A printable "booklet style" MaineArtistAccess and Education Artist Directory.**
- **Image library for MAINEARTISTACCESS artists.**
- **Creative economy arts and cultural business directory.**
- **Searchable Percent for Art database** – provides contact information and installation images.
- **Ability to add an image to your artist directory listing.**
- **Discovery Research site directory** – a listing of cultural resources within the discovery research program.

The best endorsement of any product or service ultimately comes from satisfied customers. As more and more members of Maine's art community recognize and use the many features and valuable services that MAINEARTS.com provides, the agency is receiving testimonials like these:

Judy Lloyd, executive director for Johnson Hall Performing Arts Center in Gardiner has found MAINEARTS.com to be an extremely useful tool.

"I know artists and art patrons are seeing me on MaineArts.com because they are telling me so."

"I value the opportunity to post Johnson Hall's performances and programs on the events listings at MAINEARTS.com," Lloyd said. "I also use it to find out current information about available grants."

Ann Cornelison of Dance Eastport was equally enthusiastic about the benefits and services provided by utilizing MAINEARTS.com.

"After attending a Maine Arts Commission workshop in Eastport, I was so impressed by the enthusiasm and knowledge of their tech expert that I went home and registered Dance Eastport on their website the very next day," Cornelison said. "It couldn't have been easier. The site is self-explanatory, user-friendly and logical to use, with a variety of helpful services."

Milva Smith of Bywater Gallery in Bangor, says her gallery relies on MAINEARTS.com as an important marketing tool.

"I have used it extensively to promote and grow my gallery by announcing calls for art, new exhibitions and general information about my business," Smith said. "I know artists and art patrons are seeing me on MAINEARTS.com because they are telling me so."

Haven't been to MAINEARTS.com lately? Why not log on today and see what the Maine Arts Commission can do for you! Not finding what you're looking for? Contact the agency today at 207/287-2724.

As always, the Maine Arts Commission is eager to know about services and information that you would like to see on MAINEARTS.com.

For website related questions or issues, contact Lisa Veilleux, technology/website associate, lisa.veilleux@maine.gov or 207/287-7050.

NEFA'S EXPEDITIONS PROGRAM BRINGS TREND-SETTING DANCE COMPANY TO MAINE

In October of 2004, a unique dance company – based in urban Oakland, California – spent a week in rural Maine, performing, doing educational outreach, conducting classes and workshops.

The AXIS Dance Company, as part of the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) Expeditions program, provided an arts experience not often available outside of the southern areas of the state, particularly Portland.

AXIS incorporates dancers with and without disabilities. The troupe is considered at the forefront of what is termed, “physically integrated dance,” a powerful and inclusive form of dance. The company – while based in California’s Bay Area – has toured all over the country, as well as Germany and Russia.

The funding provided by NEFA’s Expeditions program in the form of a Touring Grant allowed the communities of Orono, Old Town, Bangor and other surrounding towns an unusual opportunity to experience this empowering and eye-opening form of dance.

The troupe combined strong, contemporary choreography, great costumes as well as solid production elements and values – allowing audiences in and around Orono to see dance as they have never witnessed it before. Beginning with their Thursday performance at the Maine Center for the Arts, audiences had their perceptions challenged regarding dance, movement, disability and ability.

According to the group’s website (www.axisdance.org), the company attracts dancers with and without disabilities who are interested in exploring new ways of movement. The nature of the performances allows them to expand the boundaries of traditional dance.



THE NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR AXIS DANCE COMPANY OF OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, TO PERFORM IN RURAL MAINE IN 2004. THE COMPANY INCORPORATES DANCERS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES.

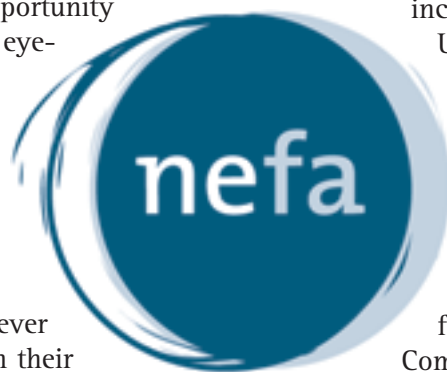
PHOTO BY ANDY MOGG.

- support New England as a laboratory for the development and successful presentation of arts projects for region-wide touring.
- broaden the range of arts projects and activities available to New England communities.
- encourage thorough planning and delivery of innovative cross-discipline, cross-sector and/or cross-cultural projects that provide meaningful community-artist-presenter interaction.
- stimulate better collaborative opportunities in arts touring and presentation.

“Programs such as Expeditions give a project like the AXIS Dance Company some community depth – there is community interaction, workshops and other programs that provide more than just a performance,” said Adrienne Petrillo, the Expeditions Program Manager. “It also helps us allow outreach into communities that might be under-served by the arts.”

This residency by the AXIS Dance Company is just another example of the importance of the arts in expanding awareness as well as access to cultural opportunities for everyone. NEFA continues to foster engaging opportunities and promotes excellence and accessibility for artists, arts organizations and audiences throughout New England.

For more information about the New England Foundation for the Arts, go to www.nefa.org.



Not only did the group hold a major performance for the public on the University of Maine campus in Orono, but also workshops were provided. These included a master class for the University’s dance students and a performance at the Old Town Elementary School.

“This was unique in that it was a week-long residency at the University,” said Stephen Wicks, education and outreach coordinator for the school and Maine Arts Commission member. “It allowed students, like the elementary school children in Old Town, opportunities to increase awareness about disability through seeing the performance.”

All of this fulfills the guidelines established by NEFA as part of the touring grant that funded this residency. As part of the criteria, NEFA strives to provide the following as part of its Expeditions program:

Remembering Benny Reehl, the father of “new vaudeville”

The arts community loses a special friend & supporter

When Benny Reehl passed away in February, the Maine arts community lost a friend and a one-of-a-kind member of the arts family. He was nationally known as the father of “new vaudeville” – a term he coined to describe live performers who combine magic, mime, juggling and acting.



Always an innovator, the acclaimed Reehl fulfilled the roles of actor, teacher, director and producer. Both he and his wife Denise were renowned performers and traveled with theater productions and variety shows.

In 1973, at the behest of the late Tony Montanaro – a legend in his own right – Benny, Denise and their four children packed up their belongings and headed north to Maine from upstate New York to join Montanaro’s ambitious undertaking, the Celebration Barn Theatre. This began a 30-year professional relationship and friendship between Montanaro and the Reehls.

Denise Reehl describes her husband as someone who was a visionary.

“He saw things that others didn’t. This could be frustrating for him at times,” said Reehl. “He was able to maintain his optimism however, as he moved forward to embrace his ideas.”

Idea generation was what Reehl was about. Never content with the status quo, in 1977, Reehl decided he wanted to restore a 1928 Reo Speedwagon which then became the touring vehicle for the *Buckfield Leather n’ Lather Traveling Variety Show*, modeled after the traveling soap shows of the past. In 1980, the Reehls sold the truck and moved their talents indoors to a theatre setting, with the *New England New Vaudeville Revue*. For the next decade, the pair produced, directed and introduced thousands to their unique brand of entertainment and variety shows.



There were countless performers, artists and other creative types that Reehl touched during his years in Maine. Gus Jacacci was one of them. The two originally met at a conference of the American Society for Training and Development; Jacacci was facilitating a group activity that Reehl was taking part in.

“We spent the entire time on the introductions of the various interesting people gathered,” said Jacacci. “We never got beyond the introductions of the people in the group. Benny was so blown away, and we became friends as a result.”

While Reehl was a tremendously talented director, producer and performer – he was much more than that. Both his wife and Jacacci referred to him as a social architect. Jacacci draws upon the words of Thomas Jefferson to describe his longtime friend and colleague.

“Jefferson stated that social architecture is divine grace revealed in natural order, used for the planning and enhancement of human fulfillment,” he said. “Benny was someone who was able to bring together the worlds of art and social architecture into the worlds of business and education. He was what Buckminster Fuller described as a ‘professional generalist’ – the kind of person Fuller believed was the key to community. He [Reehl] brought to the discussion the voice of artistic performance.”

The Reehls were also an integral part of a 1980s partnership formed to restore the Johnson Hall Opera House in downtown Gardiner. Both Benny and Denise became artistic directors of the project, which carries forth their vision as a community arts space for Gardiner.

The Maine Arts Commission joins Benny’s family and friends in mourning the loss of this gifted and enthusiastic performer.

“He was a visionary.

He saw things that others didn’t.”

Disappearing Transformation

Public art & censorship

Until now, Giles' own paintings have never been gathered together in a solo show on his own turf — largely as a result of the censorship incident that affected the direction of his career.

This article is excerpted and adapted from the essay by Gail Scott and the artist's statement by Anderson Giles in the catalogue brochure published by the University of Maine at Presque Isle. The brochure accompanied the exhibition, "Anderson Giles: Selected Paintings 1985-2005."

In 1986, the Maine Percent for Art program commissioned a painting from Anderson Giles to be hung in Wieden Hall, at the University of Maine at Presque Isle. Giles installed the painting, *Transformation*, and then left campus for the summer. When he returned, the painting had disappeared.

Anderson Giles is a painter, photographer, filmmaker, videographer, World War II historian, documentarian, lecturer, Reed Art Gallery director and — last but not least — professor of art in the University of Maine at Presque Isle's thriving Fine Arts Program. For more than 25 years Giles has produced, in his campus studio, the large, luminous abstract paintings that have gained renown and admiration across the United States and abroad. The list of solo and group exhibitions of Giles' work is impressive and extensive — from the Nancy Moore Gallery in New York City to the Center for Maine Contemporary Art in Rockport, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Concetta Gallery in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Until now, however, Giles' own paintings have never been gathered together in a solo show on his own turf — largely as a result of the censorship incident that affected the direction of his career.

Despite Giles' efforts to learn why the painting mysteriously disappeared, no official explanation was given for the removal of this piece of public art. The University of Maine at Presque Isle administration appears to have removed the painting after complaints by a number of individuals who found the



TRANSFORMATION,
H. ANDERSON GILES
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS,
1985, 48" X 60."

painting objectionable, based on their personal interpretation of the imagery.

By law, any work of art commissioned through the Percent for Art process cannot be moved, removed or altered in anyway except through formal written application to the Maine Arts Commission and with express permission and involvement of the artist. No one from the University informed the Maine Arts

Commission of the removal of the commissioned piece, nor did they inform the artist. *Transformation* was never reinstalled, nor was the issue of artistic censorship ever given an adequate public hearing — causing Giles to conclude that his paintings could not be accepted in or by his own community. Turning his sights elsewhere, he sought exposure and development of his artistic career outside of Maine.

The solo exhibition, recently on view at the Reed Gallery at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, as well as this article, seek to amend the injustice surrounding the removal of Giles' painting. *Transformation* is included as a key work in the recent exhibition, at the conclusion of which it will be permanently re-installed on campus, bringing this saga to a rightful conclusion. Nineteen years was too long a time for the Public Art process to be completed, raising an eerie specter of the ease with which censorship can invade first amendment rights.

Story continues on next page . . .

Story continued from previous page.

We can look to commentary by noted art critics around the country to discover the enthusiastic reception that Giles' paintings have enjoyed. Showing her grasp of the essence of his work, CeCe Bullard of the *Richmond Virginia Times Dispatch*, for instance, observes that Giles' paintings "... seem to spring spontaneously from the subconscious and are visual metaphors for the arduous journey of the spirit." Moreover, they "... speak to our primal passions and to those profound truths, which are strongly felt yet difficult to



ANDERSON GILES, PROFESSOR OF ART, TEACHES A CLASS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT PRESQUE ISLE'S THRIVING FINE ARTS PROGRAM. FOR MORE THAN 25 YEARS, GILES HAS PRODUCED, IN HIS CAMPUS STUDIO, THE LARGE, LUMINOUS ABSTRACT PAINTINGS THAT HAVE GAINED RENOWN AND ADMIRATION ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD.

articulate with words." Alison Corlett (*City Pulse*) notes that his work "shakes the ground I walk on with intense, lively and thought provoking images ... He treats his paintings as souls needing to be touched rather than pristine objects of art." And Maine author and critic Edgar Allen Beem (*Maine Times*) sees his work as "... big, bold, colorful canvases, evocative of deep psychic space and hot with the residue of myth and mysticism ... One sees in the painting of Anderson Giles the same searching, haunting lyricism that one hears in the music of Van Morrison. His paintings seem not learned, but lived, like direct transcriptions of intuited experience. He brings to the modern conventions of abstract painting both a powerful emotional urgency and a sense of art as a personal quest for knowledge ... He ignores the obvious physical beauty of Maine in favor of pursuing the deeper spiritual and emotional dimensions of life lived in the North Country." Accolades like these are a significant measure of success and an affirmation to the artist of his achievement.

Through the work of Anderson Giles, we glimpse precisely that union of life and creative spirit so eloquently expressed in the paintings: luminous light and layered, evocative color, the energy and physicality of imagery and the tensions and mythic proportions of his subject matter.

The following comments are from Anderson Giles himself, on a life lived as a Maine painter:

"Outside the large window of the studio where I create my paintings, northern lights and stunning sunsets often illuminate the vast empty northern Maine landscape with a primordial glow. Light permeates the senses, reflecting from the snow, mountains and endless northern skies. Old ruins stand isolated, silent and loom as aged sentinels from a distant past. In the summer, it is verdant and beautiful, while the long frozen winters are unforgiving and brutal. It is a land where the infinite light and space encourage introspection and mental/psychic wanderings, which seem to relate the present to other times and mythic, distant places. It is a land where objective and non-objective thinking and imagery effortlessly co-exist and seem as natural a process as a winter storm. An artist cannot live here and not be influenced by the spirit of the inhabitants, the land, the light and the space. Although these influences may be combined with other concepts and inspirations, they are always present in my work.

My recent paintings deal with diverse inspirations whose essence is synthesized into visual statements. The images, which are meant to be personal yet maintain a sense of the universal,

suggest sensations of life, death, decay, rebirth, creation, destruction, the prehistoric, the mythic and the passage of time. The formal visual elements originate from landscape/nature cycles, dream images, musical rhythms, history, myth, travel and important personal and family events. In addition to external influences, I am also interested in exploring the inner arena of consciousness where the experiences of life lie stored, ready to be re-understood and re-synthesized into new understandings and images. The images bring forth visual commentary on the known as well as the unknown realms of my existence and touch on both the complexities and wonders of the journey of life.

Aside from life in Northern Maine, much of my new work has been heavily influenced by my research, documentary and creative work on the island of Tinian in the southwestern Pacific. This small island contains the huge abandoned air base (once the largest and busiest in the world) from which the atomic bombs were assembled and launched against Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This site has had an enduring and profound effect on my images. Here, the site that launched us into the age of nuclear anxiety now lies unknown to most. It sleeps, jungle-covered, with its saga of awesome events hidden from the world which it so profoundly affected. The geometry of miles and miles of abandoned white coral runways, the historic atom bomb loading facilities, plus the hundreds of abandoned, rotting structures being reclaimed by the voracious jungle is an astounding visual spectacle. The Island is still littered with the tragic relics of war. Huge chunks of wreckage become markers and monuments to human genius and folly. Discovering war relics — human bones, prehistoric stone columns and pottery shards — all on the same island, stretches one's perception of time and possibilities. This, combined with the amazing intensity of tropical color, light and vegetation, provide me with a subject that fires my imagination. It is a place where I can stand alone and let time and history speak to me. The ruins become markers for a new dimension of perception. Many of my new paintings reflect this immense drama with its history of triumph, defeat, suffering, survival, accomplishment and spiritual transcendence.

Spending months immersed in the native Chamorro culture in the Marianas has also given me insight into a way of life much different from our 21st Century American existence. Time exists but does not overpower, life flows instead of rushes. Yesterday, prehistory and tomorrow all co-exist in the present. Superstition, myths and legends are woven into everyday conversation and thought. Islanders, having grown up amidst the ruins of war, have seen time cover once powerful military installations with jungle and erode them into nothingness. Their island, once cast upon the front pages of world newspapers in screaming headlines, now has receded into obscurity. Elders are treated with great reverence for their wisdom and memories. Prehistoric ruins and columns are constant reminders of long vanished cultures, which once inhabited the island. Simplicity and honesty are treasured. My current work also incorporates references to the sheer vastness of the space and geography involved in the Pacific arena. In 2002 and 2004, my wife, Celia

and I embarked on a series of voyages, which took us to many Pacific islands, Thailand, Malaysia, China, Vietnam, Korea, Russian and Japan. Spending months in those far-flung regions revealed countless new cultures, sites, art forms and human endeavors, which continue to influence my creative work. Other issues woven into the mental and visual fabric of my paintings include concern with our media-saturated culture and how it assaults us with trendy and fleeting barrages of images, messages, fads, disasters, scandals, etc. How do we find our creative center amidst this avalanche of confused and contradictory sense overload? How can a higher truth and deeper understanding of our lives emerge? For me, painting is a key to this process. It is the point where you discard the reality that our contemporary existence forces upon us and embark upon a new reality based upon personal truths, perceptions and experience. I see myself, as along with many other artists, working to remind a society enslaved by an evolving mass of communication, production and consumerism that art is far more than just another product, number, or investment opportunity that fits easily into the ledger on some computer screen. In fact, art is one of the few endeavors, which can provide an opportunity for sharing the sincere communication of the creative, spiritual core of another human being. Art provides the chance to sense the true essence of another's humanity and imagination. In our impersonal world, this type of opportunity is increasingly rare.

As a painting instructor, I must understand and demonstrate the ability to deal with all levels of abstraction and objective visions. For me, painting is painting and problems with the continuity and relationships between paintings are only a concern for those who have to view art with inflexible, prescribed formulas. Any informed viewer today realizes that ultimately, creative versatility is applauded by history and that exploration of style and technique is recognized as a mechanism for continued growth. My current work is also meant to confront the boundaries of our own self-imposed cognitive structures. The paintings are meant to explore prearranged attitudes, which we all impose on visual reality and life's experience. They attempt to awaken far-reaching associations related to life and existence, both past and present. Intellect cannot always define visual truth. Truth — spiritual, visual and literary — sometimes comes from other realms. These paintings also beckon for us to realize that those things we hold to be certain may in reality be illusion.

For me, painting is a reminder that each day new opportunities for understanding and realization lie waiting for discovery. My work is a visual synthesis of many influences. A central binding core is the never-ending process of change, demise and re-emergence, which the passage of time brings. Whether time is geologic millennia, western man's hours, or psychic time — its passage has sculpted the past and will sculpt the future."

*Anderson Giles ignores the
obvious physical beauty of
Maine in favor of pursuing the
deeper spiritual and
emotional dimensions of life
lived in the North Country.*

Artist Conversations

*This is the first in a series of articles
intended to bring attention to
emerging artists and their influences.*

LINDEN
FREDERICK
*established
artist*

ALISON
RECTOR
*emerging
artist*



ARTISTS LINDEN FREDERICK AND ALISON RECTOR IN THE STUDIO.

Alison Rector has studied with Belfast painter Linden Frederick for more than 10 years after receiving her BA in Studio Art at Brown University in Providence, RI. Alison Rector is represented by Ten High Street, Camden, Maine and Greenhut Gallery, Portland, Maine.

Linden Frederick studied at Houghton College, Houghton, NY, Ontario College of Art, Toronto, Canada and Florence, Italy. He has lived full-time in Maine since 1990. Linden Frederick is represented by Forum Gallery, New York City / Los Angeles.

Here they converse about that long-term and mutually beneficial relationship.

HOW DID WE MEET?

Alison: I think I took a workshop in color theory from you in 1994, being familiar with your work from Gallery 68 in Belfast. I was impressed with your approach to color and how you used it. At the workshop you asked me if I would be interested in taking lessons. I remember you gave away your painting from the workshop in a lottery by putting everyone's name in a hat! That was great.

Linden: Having to verbalize what I do actually helps me clarify it to my own work.

WHY DO WE LIVE AND WORK IN MAINE?

Alison: I came to Maine in 1990, to live in the country after living in the city and suburbs up to that point. I like the quiet of the rural life for my day to day work — it's easier to focus on what I'm doing — I live on a farm with my husband Eric Rector. I remember when we moved to Maine that I asked him for an "escape clause" in case I couldn't find any art or artists to connect with here, but as it's turned out I've connected with many more artists than when we lived in Boston.



Linden: Fringe places hit my buttons and Maine has a wealth of those – lots of places that are “underdeveloped” and have a lot of character. I like being in the “corner” of the country and the quiet that brings to my lifestyle.

Alison: Do you feel we are in a geographic disadvantage living here?

Linden: Quite the opposite – Maine has a cachet, to begin with, and I think we have an edge over much of the rest of the country because of Maine’s historic ties to art. When I think of the number of Maine painters who are nationally known, both past and present, it’s pretty impressive.

Alison: I agree and when I go to other places and see the work that is showing there – New York City, London – I’m impressed with how well Maine stacks up and how well we are represented. Our summer artist population is impressive as well as our internationally known art schools – the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture for example.

*Fringe places hit
my buttons and
Maine has a
wealth of those.*

continued on next page . . .

(ABOVE LEFT) **FAIRGROUD**, LINDEN FREDERICK
OIL ON LINEN, 2004, 40" X 40"
COURTESY OF THE FORUM GALLERY.

(ABOVE RIGHT) **SUNDAY NIGHT**, ALISON RECTOR
OIL ON LINEN, 20" X 20."

To view these images in color, please visit





. . . continued from previous page

Linden: SO LIVING IN THIS BEAUTIFUL SETTING, WHY DO YOU PAINT INTERIORS?

I don't think Maine is a barrier at all – in fact quite the opposite. My lifestyle here allows me to work at my best, I think.

Alison: For several reasons. One comes from what I learned from you over the last 10 years – how to properly use color. Years ago I was doing landscapes and portraits in oil, but when I started thinking more about color due to your input, I remember feeling a desire to control the light in the painting and where it was coming from so I could think about the way I was working with color to create the illusion of light. Working outside for me the changing light was just too confusing. So, with an interior I choose whether the light is coming from a window or from inside the room and the light is consistent from one day to the next and that has helped me understand how to use color the way I want to. Also, an interior has a psychological component that interests me – it is a portrait in itself and I enjoy the implied human presence. But why do you paint landscapes?

To view these images in color, please visit



(LEFT) *SUMMER NAP*, ALISON RECTOR
OIL ON LINEN, 28" X 28."

(RIGHT) *HENRY AND CHICK*, LINDEN FREDERICK
OIL ON LINEN, 2004, 40" X 40."

(FAR RIGHT) *GOOD FENCES*, LINDEN FREDERICK
OIL ON LINEN, 2004, 40" X 40."

Linden: Night landscapes have a mood that triggers a response in me and, I hope, my viewers. And that to me is what makes art worth looking at – that visceral response. There's a longing within the viewers sometimes, they tell me – either positive or negative – for something in their past or something that is missing in their lives – often a feeling of nostalgia is present as well.

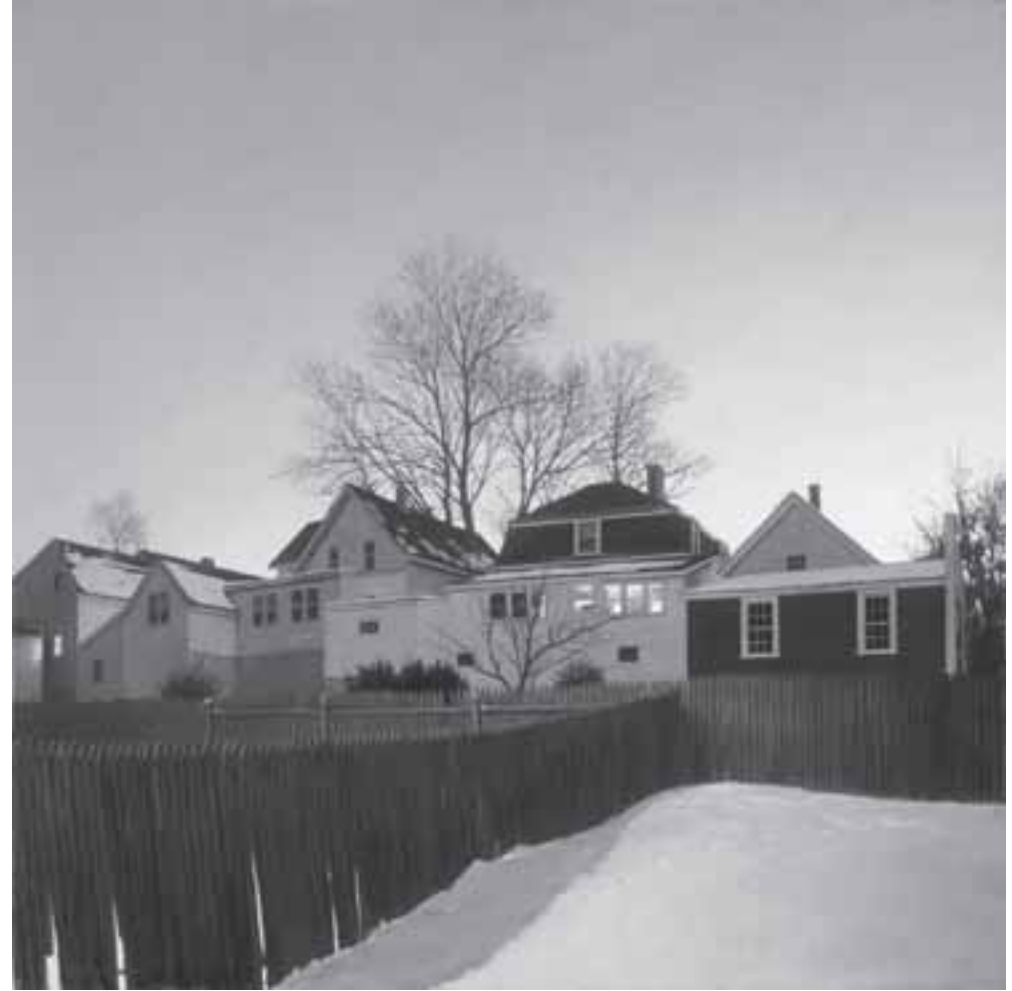
WHY DO YOU PAINT REALISTICALLY, ALISON? IS MAINE A BARRIER TO PAINTING OTHERWISE?

Alison: No, I don't think Maine is a barrier at all – in fact quite the opposite. My lifestyle here allows me to work at my best, I think. I travel often outside of Maine, especially to New York City. Realism is the language I feel I can use most effectively to get my idea across to my audience. I've always painted realistically and I've learned through the years representational painting is the best vehicle for my abilities. I love looking at color field paintings and Donald Judd sculptures and the elegance and distillation of that work, but for me in my own work and world representational painting is what interests. It's the vocabulary I use.

Linden: I think "language" is a good way of putting it. To communicate something you need language and for me also that language is realism.

Alison: Viewers can easily enter our worlds. You told me recently you've been making your work a little more minimalist and that can be somewhat abstract as well.

Linden: We often give too much, a lot of information that isn't necessary and with the minimalist approach I tighten up the information I give.



HOW HAVE WE BENEFITED FROM OUR PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP?

Alison: I've really benefited from having a mentor and studying with you over the years. Just learning how to properly use brushes and paint was a good start! And it's evolved into advice on business relationships with galleries, framing, and the work's content. Just having someone whose opinion I respect and who can critique an individual piece of work as well as a body of work – it's invaluable. I enjoy conversations with other creative people as well – actors, musicians, but very few people can really give me specifics about what I'm doing and that's the most valuable aspect for me. Now our relationship has evolved to a quarterly critique which is perfect for the level I'm at currently. The disadvantage of having studied with you for so long is that sometimes people ask me how much I'm influenced by you and your work and whether I'm trying to imitate your work – obviously this comes from people who are familiar with you and your work.

Linden: I learn a lot from critiquing your work and apply these lessons and solutions to problems I'm working out in my own work. Students always struggle with whether or not their work reflects their teacher's work too much. But I think our

styles are very distinct and our subject matter is very different. If our work were to hang side by side you would see similarities in color and texture but you would not see a similar aesthetic.

Alison: Our collaboration has resulted in my much deeper understanding of color and values, starting with the grisaille studies we did early on in my lessons with you, and those studies really taught me the importance of putting texture into the under-painting.

Linden: WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON RIGHT NOW?

Alison: I have a large painting of an interior of a summer house that will be featured in a solo exhibition at 10 High Street Gallery [John and Sarah Ames] in Camden, Maine, opening Labor Day weekend this year. What about you?

Linden: My next show will be in Los Angeles in 2006, at Forum Gallery and will be called "Paintings Noir." The painting I'm working on right now is one of a pair of train pictures – different cars. One is a caboose, the other a passenger car – a lot of challenging train wheels to draw and paint!

What arts education can do

Coming together through differences

BY TERESA COOPER, JUNIOR,
NOKOMIS REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
IN NEWPORT.

The Nokomis Regional High Honors History class of which I am part participated in a program called “Building Community Through the Arts” (BCTA) this past March.

The program pairs a professional drama educator with a high school class for two weeks in order to help build community connections by combining academic content with issues in the students’ lives. Cathy Plourde joined Jason O’Reilly’s sophomore class to help us create a play based on some of the themes from Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*. We performed the play and participated in group discussions with students from other Penobscot and Piscataquis county high schools at a conference at the University of Maine in March.

When Mr. O’Reilly first told our class that we were going to create a play based on themes from The Scarlet Letter, we were definitely confused. For starters, very few of us had acting experience and most of us had no idea how we could take themes from this book written nearly two centuries ago and relate it to our lives today.

When Mr. O’Reilly first told our class that we were going to create a play based on themes from *The Scarlet Letter*, we were definitely confused. For starters, very few of us had acting experience and most of us had no idea how we could take themes from this book written nearly two centuries ago and relate it to our lives today.

Despite our constant fears about the impossibility of the task at hand, Mr. O’Reilly assured us that this could be accomplished and joked that nobody had died doing BCTA in years past. Part of the difficulty of narrowing our focus on a theme was the class dynamics. We seemed to bicker with one another constantly and getting a collaborative task completed was near impossible. You could see how we socially divided our class was just by peeking into Mr. O’Reilly’s room on any given day. After a couple of days of “ice breaker” activities with Ms. Plourde, we began to gel as a group and a theme of social acceptance and peer rejection took root.

While doing one of these activities, we serendipitously created a powerful scene where a gay character stood alone and my classmates and I assumed roles and said what we thought other kids would say to this character.

From this scene, we worked backwards and divided the class into four social groups: “Wayne’s World,” the gay character and his two girl friends who can’t understand why people



(ABOVE) FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, EMILY MOWER, BRITTANY NEAL AND MATTIE PORTER.

(RIGHT) LEFT TO RIGHT, BRIANNA LAVOIE, WAYNE MAY AND VANESSA TREMBLAY.

PHOTOS BY JASON O’REILLY.

don't like Wayne; "The Popular Girls," a host of well-liked but somewhat arrogant girls who fear Wayne's influence on their status; "The Jocks," a homophobic group of athletic boys, including one character who is tormented because he is secretly gay; and, "The Bystanders," the somewhat-neutral, mature students who care more about their next test and less about the social world at the school.

These four groups then created scenes in which they developed characters, focusing on how each of these characters would view the gay student and what they might say to him. After a few classes with Ms. Plourde, we had created a play that mirrored what we thought represented a typical picture at any given high school, including Nokomis.

In March at the University of Maine conference, we performed the play three times for other BCTA classes. Each of these performances was followed by group discussions in which we talked with the audience about how we created this play and how students view gay students. One of the interesting things that came up in these discussions was how students in the audience saw discrimination against gay students in their own schools.

Almost all of the students in the audience could see similar social groups in their own schools; many even said they hear the discriminatory words from our play – *gay*, *fag*, *queer*, etc. – thrown around all the time in their own hallways. Also, many of the boys in the audience seemed uncomfortable talking about a fictional gay character and some even denied that there were any gay students in their own schools. We were surprised!

Looking back at this experience brings to light some interesting reflections.

First, we seemed to be satisfied with the final collaborative product – even though performing for other students was embarrassing, especially given the topic and the language of our play. Second, we have become more aware of how powerful our words are, especially discriminatory words like

gay and fag. Third, some of us in Mr. O'Reilly's class had personal transformations. One student commented after BCTA was completed that despite his homophobia he was less fearful of gay students and more understanding of how discrimination impacted people. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, our class dynamics have changed. We seem to bicker less, interact more fully, and respect one another more.

Creating this play was totally different than working in the classroom – we were put in a situation where we had to cooperate in order to create a finished piece and collaboration was vital to our success. We learned that despite the fact that we are all different – in class and in life – we are all part of the same community and building a strong community is important to us.

Every time we went onstage, our differences were set aside and we produced a powerful play. All of us getting along became the theme of our play.



“God put me on this earth . . .

For someone who once considered herself a non-dancer, Lewiston’s Cynthia Larock has done well. Since 1996, Larock has been studying the art of Franco step dancing. For several years, she apprenticed under master step dancer Benoit Bourque and is now taking on apprentices of her own. She says she used to be afraid of dancing; but when she was introduced to contradancing, she discovered she wasn’t a total klutz.

When she first started attending contradances, she found that the music she most enjoyed dancing to was the French Canadian dance music.

“I can’t help it. The music makes me want to dance,” said Larock.

Being Acadian, we didn’t really have a lot of Québec influence in our music. When I started hearing Québec music, I freaked out, and that’s what caused me to want to learn French.

Not surprisingly, Larock now finds herself working with two members of the band Boreal Tordu, which specializes in Acadian and Quebecois music. Portland Fiddler Steve Mues and drummer Ron Bonnevie, of Farmington, have been apprenticing with Larock, learning Franco step dancing techniques.

“It’s more and more a piece of what we do,” said Bonnevie. “The music that we play is representative of our Franco-American background in a typical soirée in a French home. Somebody would be playing the bones, someone would be playing the fiddle and someone would be playing the spoons. I just thought it would be a nice addition to what we do.”

In his family, Bonnevie is the only member of his generation that speaks French fluently. None of his brothers speak the language.

“If I didn’t speak French — if I didn’t carry that on — there would be a hole in my family,” said Bonnevie.

Mues says his family didn’t have a lot of great dancers, but they were great music makers. Mues’ grandfather lived on an island off the coast of Nova Scotia. When he was hired to play his fiddle for a dance, he rowed to the mainland.

Mues’ face lights up as he talks of exploring the rhythms in Acadian, Cajun and Quebecois music.



“Being Acadian, we didn’t really have a lot of Québec influence in our music. When I started hearing Québec music, I freaked out, and that’s what caused me to want to learn French,” Bonnevie said. “And as for the dancing — the rhythms — it’s a whole new instrument when it’s done by a body.”

For the past few years, Larock has been teaching younger dancers. She likes the idea of investing in young people that may not be aware of their own cultural roots. It is a way for them to feel their kinship to their Canadian heritage.

The only thing she likes better than dancing herself, is teaching it. She is also continuing to learn along the way. As she listens to music written and played by Mues, she discovers

to put more men out on the dance floor.”



(TOP RIGHT) RON BONNEVIE, A MEMBER OF THE ACADIAN BAND BOREAL TORDU, AT HIS HOME IN FARMINGTON.

(BOTTOM RIGHT) CYNTHIA LAROCK ENJOYS TEACHING STEP DANCING TO BOTH YOUTH AND ADULTS.

(LEFT) PHOTO ILLUSTRATION.



the sound of the dance steps is actually in the music.

Mues and Bonnevie aren't the first adult men Larock has coaxed onto the dance floor.

“God put me on this earth to put more men out on the dance floor,” she said. “Women, too — girls already like to dance and if I can make young men willing to try it . . . then they're not gonna say ‘I don't dance.’ In the back of their minds they're going to remember that they did it, and it was fun,” says Larock.

It's not just about baskets anymore . . .

*“We see
growth.
That’s
the good
thing.”*

The Wabanaki Art Center Gallery, in Old Town is expanding its scope. The gallery was opened in 2002 by the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance. Beginning with a donated inventory worth \$3,000, its first mission was marketing baskets made by Alliance members.

Recently, the Maine Small Business Development Centers (part of the University of Southern Maine) advised the art center to expand its scope to include artists that work in other mediums. That expansion began last year, and the shop now offers carvings, jewelry, books and videos about the Wabanaki, as well as music. “We had been seeing these artists coming to our market,” says Theresa Secord, the executive director of the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance. “They were asking to be included.” The shop is also handling salves, teas and balms used in traditional healing.

Secord says the Art Center now has a holistic approach that goes beyond baskets. The website (maineindianbaskets.org) has also been redesigned to accommodate an expansion. “We see growth. That’s the good thing,” says Secord.

*(Right)
Nina Neptune
examines a carved
club at the
Wabanaki Art
Center Gallery.*

*(Detail)
Carved club,
Don Polchies,
Indian Island.*





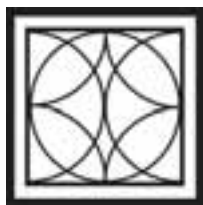
(Left) Jennifer Neptune helps manage the Wabanaki Cultural Center in Old Town.



(Right) Antique carvings at the Wabanaki Art Center Gallery.



(Bottom) Don Polchies shows a carved club at the Wabanaki Art Center Gallery.



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The Maine Arts Commission shall encourage and stimulate public interest and participation in the cultural heritage and programs of our state; shall expand the state's cultural resources; and shall encourage and assist freedom of artistic expression for the well being of the arts, to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of persons in all parts of the state.

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CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Artist Conversations: Linden Frederick & Alison Rector

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What arts education can do: Coming together through differences

COMMUNITY ARTS & TRADITIONAL ARTS

"God put me on this earth . . . to put more men out on the dance floor."
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